

This Page Is Inserted by IFW Operations
and is not a part of the Official Record

BEST AVAILABLE IMAGES

Defective images within this document are accurate representations of the original documents submitted by the applicant.

Defects in the images may include (but are not limited to):

- BLACK BORDERS
- TEXT CUT OFF AT TOP, BOTTOM OR SIDES
- FADED TEXT
- ILLEGIBLE TEXT
- SKEWED/SLANTED IMAGES
- COLORED PHOTOS
- BLACK OR VERY BLACK AND WHITE DARK PHOTOS
- GRAY SCALE DOCUMENTS

IMAGES ARE BEST AVAILABLE COPY.

**As rescanning documents *will not* correct images,
please do not report the images to the
Image Problem Mailbox.**

Application No.: 09/880,769

Docket No.: 60680-1647

In the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A gasket comprising at least one metal layer having at least one through-hole and at least one metal ring welded thereto, said at least one metal ring being arranged around said at least one through-hole, a welding bead, ~~said at least one metal layer and said at least one metal ring being welded to each other along said at least one metal layer over~~ said welding bead, said welding bead maintaining said at least one metal layer and said at least one metal ring in a spaced-apart relationship.
2. (Previously Amended) The gasket according to claim 1, wherein said at least one metal layer and said at least one metal ring are spaced from each other by a distance which is constant around said at least one through-hole.
3. (Previously Amended) The gasket according to claim 1, wherein said at least one layer and said at least one metal ring are spaced from each other by a distance which varies around said at least one through-hole.
4. (Original) The gasket according to claim 1, wherein said welding bead is compressible.
5. (Original) The gasket according to claim 1, wherein said at least one metal layer is made of a material selected from the list of aluminum, sheet steel, stainless steel, spring steel and carbon steel.
6. (Original) The gasket according to claim 1, wherein said at least one metal ring is made of a material selected from the list of copper, bronze, aluminum, sheet steel, stainless steel, spring steel and carbon steel.
7. (Original) The gasket according to claim 1, wherein said welding bead extends continuously around said at least one through-hole.
8. (Currently Amended) A gasket comprising at least one metal layer having at least one through-hole and at least one metal ring welded thereto, said at least one metal ring being arranged around said at least one through-hole, a welding bead, ~~said at least one metal layer and~~

Docket No.: 60680-1647

Application No.: 09/880,769

85 said at least one metal ring being welded to ~~each other along said~~ at least one metal layer over said welding bead, said welding bead maintaining said at least one metal layer and said at least one metal ring in a spaced-apart relationship and said at least one metal layer comprising at least one sealing bead.

9. (Previously Amended) The gasket according to claim 8, wherein said sealing bead extends around said at least one metal ring.

10. (Original) The gasket according to claim 9, wherein a further metal ring is arranged around the sealing bead.

11. (Previously Amended) The gasket according to claim 8, wherein said at least one metal ring extends around the sealing bead.

12. (Previously Amended) The gasket according to claim 8, wherein said welding bead extends within the sealing bead.

13. (Previously Amended) The gasket according to claim 1, wherein the gasket comprises two adjacent metal layers having sealing beads located in each metal layer and arranged opposite with respect to each other.

14. (Previously Amended) The gasket according to claim 1, wherein the gasket comprises two adjacent metal layers having sealing beads located in each metal layer and arranged offset with respect to each other.

15. (Original) The gasket according to claim 1, wherein the gasket comprises two metal layers, at least one of which has an indentation or cranking for symmetrically aligning the metal ring.

16. (Previously Amended) A method for manufacturing a gasket having at least one metal layer, and at least one metal ring, said metal layer having at least one through hole comprising generating a welding bead in one of said metal layer and said metal ring and generating a welding joint between the metal layer and the metal ring by projection welding.

17. (Previously Amended) The method according to claim 16, comprising generating

Application No.: 09/880,769

Docket No.: 60680-1647

86 the welding bead with a shape selected from the list of U-shaped, V-shaped, Ω -shaped and trapezoidal cross section.

18. (Previously Amended) The method according to claim 16, comprising generating the welding bead in the metal layer and generating a sealing bead in the metal layer during the generational welding bead in the metal layer.

19. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 16, comprising discharging a capacitance to generate a welding current for generating the projection welding joint.

20. (Previously Amended) The method according to claim 16, comprising at least one deformation limiter within the welding bead during the generation of the welding joint.

21. (Previously Amended) The method according to claim 16, comprising arranging at least one abutment element outside the welding bead during generation of the welding joint.
